

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949

AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Group of Maria girls from Lahiri,
Chanda district

W. T. Grigson

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Hill Maria mother
and child

[Warrior Photo]

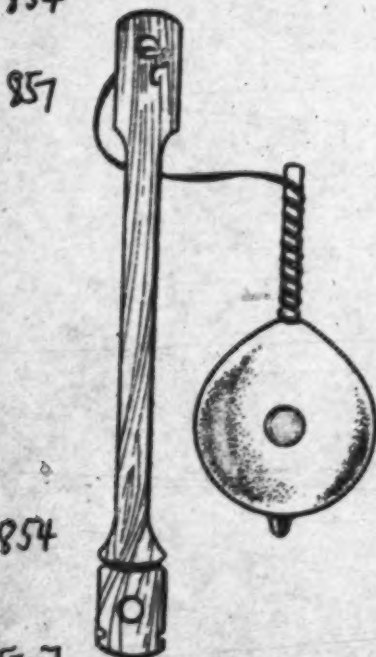
[End Plate H]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. THE LIFE OF YOUNG CHILDREN

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[853] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned
854 at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good



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[524]

FIG. 26. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8½"

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From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

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The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. TATTOOING

304 The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943

AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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'Rice in the mouth and curry in the hand.'
Mother and child figure in several murder cases

[Facing p. 65]